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TREATING MENTAL ILLNESS

at the
George A. Zeller
Mental Health Center

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- Pharmacotherapy
- Rehabilitation
- Case Management
- Counseling/Psychotherapy
- Therapeutic Milieu

5407 North University Street
Peoria, Illinois 61614
Phone 309/693-5000

The average length of treatment at Zeller Mental Health Center is 67 days

♦ Mental Hospitals no longer are custodial institutions. In the early 1960's there were some 50,000 patients in 27 state hospitals and schools for the developmentally disabled in Illinois. Most of them were custodial patients, receiving little if any treatment. For many, the hope of ever being discharged back to the community was dim. Average length of stays were computed by years -- 13 years, 15 years, 20 years. Institutionalization for 25, 30 or even 50 years was not uncommon.

♦ At the Zeller Mental Health Center -- a hospital designed to treat the most severely and chronically mentally ill persons -- active, intensive and comprehensive treatment reduces the average length of hospital stay for a recipient of the hospital's services to 67 days. Some recipients are here much longer, but some are here for much shorter stays, also.

♦ The goal of treatment at the Zeller Mental Health Center is to assist each recipient achieve the most satisfactory life possible in the least restrictive environment.

♦ TREATMENT PLANNING

♦ Treatment plans for recipients of services at the Zeller Mental Health Center are written by mental health professionals -- physicians, social workers, psychologists, counselors, activity therapists, registered nurses -- specifically for and with each individual recipient to help achieve his or her treatment goals. Major treatment modalities at Zeller MHC include:

- ♦ Pharmacotherapy
- ♦ Rehabilitation
- ♦ Case Management
- ♦ Counseling & Psychotherapy
- ♦ Therapeutic Milieu

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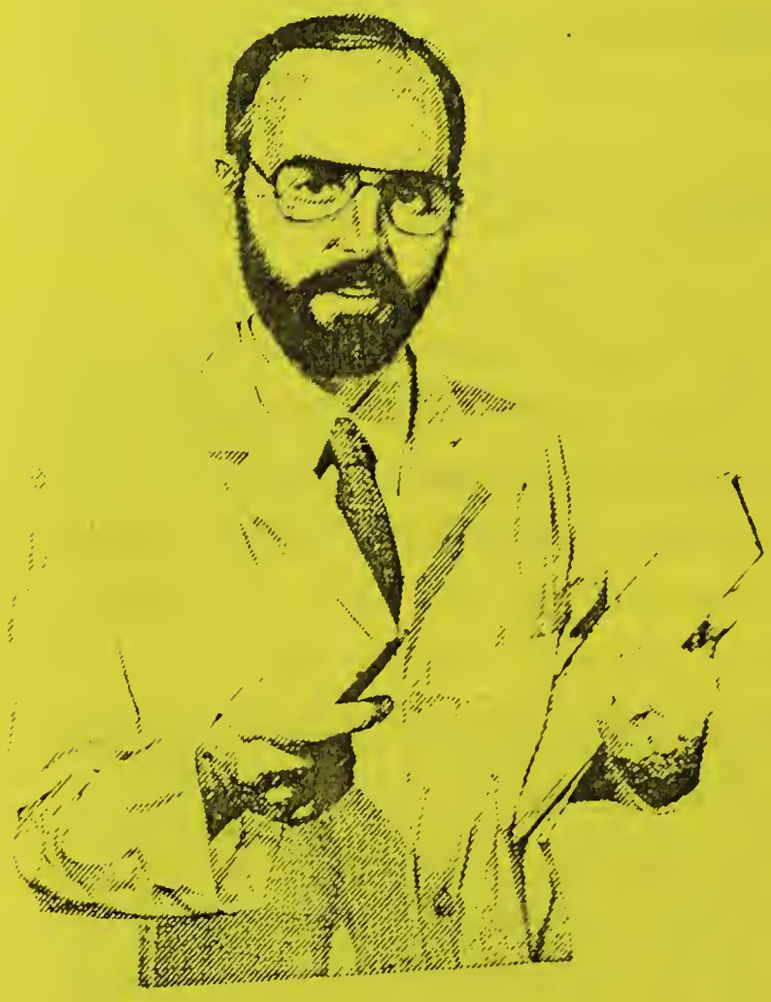
♦ PHARMACOTHERAPY

♦ . Some 70 per cent of service recipients at the Zeller Mental Health Center receive medication for the treatment of brain and functional disorders of various kinds, including psychosis, depression, anxiety and panic disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders, bipolar disorders and convulsions.



♦ All recipients are seen and examined regularly by members of the Zeller Medical Staff and medicines are prescribed as indicated. Medication for the treatment of mental disorders include antipsychotic medicines to treat psychosis; anti depressants to treat clinical depression and anxiolytics to treat anxiety, among many others.

♦ An understanding of the medications used in treating mental illness, including the effects and the side effects are taught service recipients by registered nurses in patient medication education programs.

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♦ REHABILITATION

♦ In whatever environment a person might live - -hospital, nursing home, half way house, intermediate care facility, group home, apartment, family residence -- alone or with others, certain skills are needed. These might include the ability to handle money; basic personal hygiene skills; the ability to dress appropriately and without assistance; the ability to use public transportation; the ability to shop or prepare meals, among many, many others.

♦ Most mental patients once possessed these skills of daily living - - just as we do -- for the onset of many mental illnesses is in adulthood. But the devastation of their illness - - the distorted perceptions of reality, impaired judgement, the mood swings, the hallucinations and delusions -- has robbed many mentally ill persons of their basic abilities to function in our technological and highly demanding society. Rehabilitation is designed to help recover these skills.

♦ Rehabilitation programs at Zeller include remedial reading, writing and arithmetic; occupational therapy; vocational education; leisure time usage; problem solving skills and rehabilitation counseling. Programs are planned for and tailored to the individual needs of each recipient.

♦ CASE MANAGEMENT

♦ Life after discharge - living arrangements, treatment programs, education, employment, community integration - all are part of the ongoing case management designed to help the service recipient continue coping with the mental illness after leaving the Zeller Mental Health Center.

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♦ PSYCHOTHERAPY

♦ Individual counseling and psychotherapy, group therapy, and family therapy are major mental illness treatment approaches. Therapy sessions are tailored to the patient's needs and the goals, types and frequency of such sessions are specified in the treatment plans.

♦ Counseling and psychotherapy assists the recipient and, frequently, the recipient's family, in understanding the mental illness and its symptoms, and in providing them the psychological insights and skills to cope with it.

♦ THE THERAPEUTIC MILIEU

♦ For many mental patients, the world is a frightening place. People misunderstand and, therefore, fear and discriminate against the mentally ill. And, frequently, the mentally ill are intimidated by the community. The therapeutic environment of the psychiatric hospital -- the protection it offers from the many different psychosocial stressors of the community that literally can overwhelm and destroy the coping ability of the patient -- is of itself a major treatment modality. The hospital is designed to be -- for the time necessary to assist the service recipient in the recovery process -- a warm, protective and secure haven.

Illinois Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities